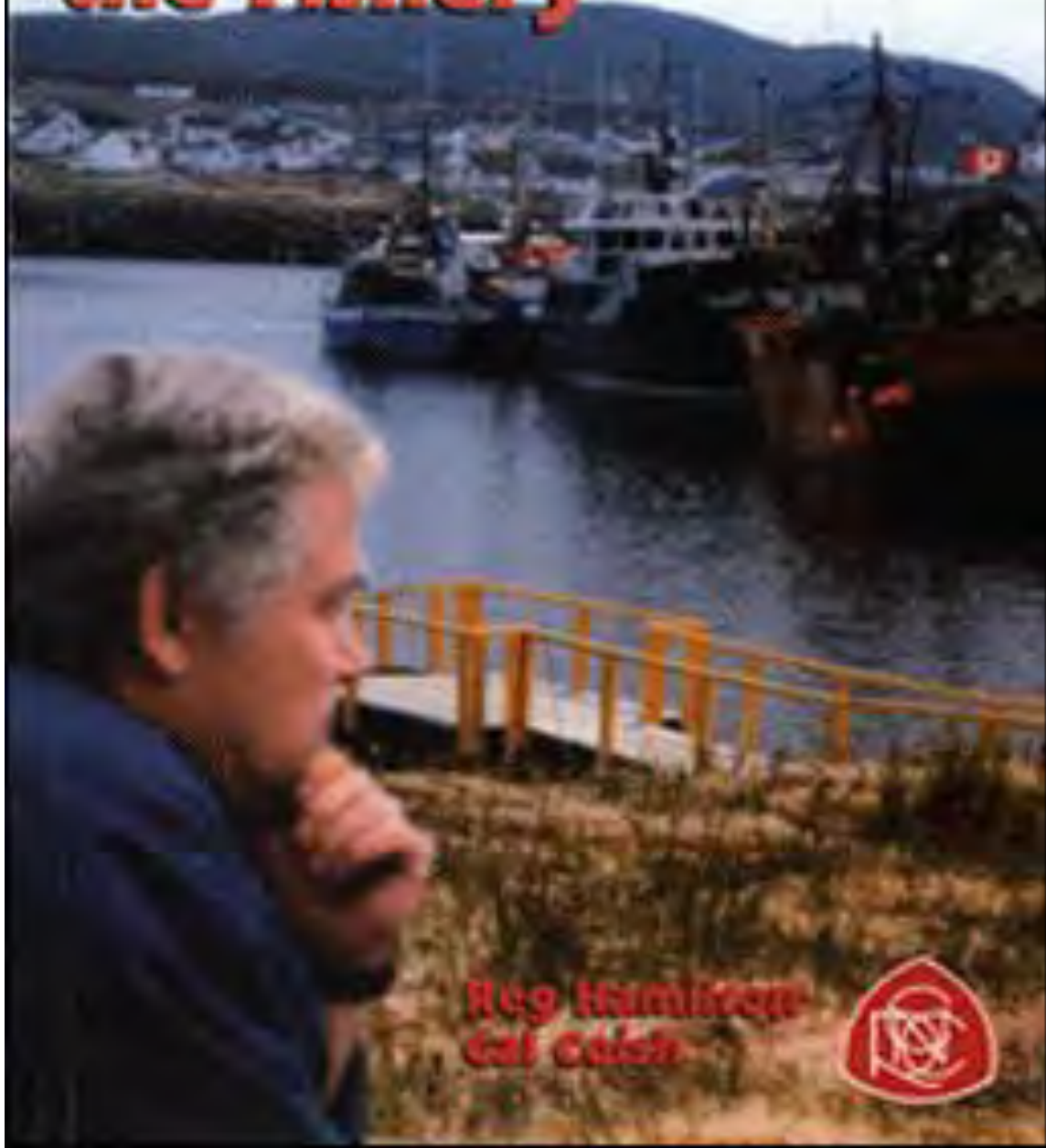


# Faces of the Fishery



Reg Hamilton  
Cat Colish



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## *Acknowledgements*

We wish to thank the many TAGS people who so kindly shared their experiences for this project. All of the students whose stories are told on the following pages have a common bond. They face many tough, personal decisions in the coming months and years. Their stories are told in their own words.

While some changes have been made to grammar and syntax throughout the book, many words and statements are unchanged, complete with grammatical errors and unique Newfoundland words and expressions. In most cases, the real names are used.

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Reg Hamilton

Cal Coish

## *Dedication*

This book is dedicated to Clyde and Mina Tibbo who show the Newfoundland and Labrador spirit and will to survive.

The first interview during the research for this book was with Clyde and Mina. These two people are an inspiration. They stand for what this province is all about.

Their sense of humour during the most difficult times reflects our unique culture- They have a sense of pride and a will to succeed, no matter what the challenges.

For five hundred years we have survived by working together. As a people we share a special bond that has grown through these centuries of struggle. Clyde and Mina Tibbo share that special bond.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are a caring people. We are a culture that knows how to laugh at ourselves, yet keep a sense of pride. We are hard working and dedicated. We never say never.

It is for these reasons we have chosen to begin this book with the story of Clyde and Mina Tibbo.

## Chapter 1

# Helping each other

It's never too late to start over. Mina and Clyde Tibbo can tell you that. They depend on each other for support and never give up. "Without the support of one another I really don't think we could make it," says Mina. "Clyde is the best friend I've ever had. Without Clyde's support I don't think I could go on. Without my support I don't think he could go on. We give each other the encouragement we need."

Their sense of humour and positive outlook on life have helped the couple through hard times. Clyde says Mina's will to succeed has been the reason for their success.

Clyde quit school in Grade 6 because he couldn't afford books or clothing. Mina quit school in Grade 8 to take care of her brothers and sisters.

Clyde worked at the Fishery Products International fish plant in Harbour Bleton for nearly half his life. He worked as a tallyman. His job was to weigh fish. He also worked as a batter machine operator. Clyde made plenty of money at the plant. Mina also worked at the plant. But Mina wasn't happy working there.

She wanted to complete her high school education.

"What has the fish plant got to offer?" she asks. "I deserve better than a Level 3 education and work in the fish plant. I told Clyde I wanted to leave the fish plant and return to school."

The 1992 cod moratorium was the break the Tibbos needed. It gave them a chance to complete their high school education and retrain for work outside the fishery.

The Tibbos signed up for night classes in 1990, but that didn't seem to suit them. Clyde took adult basic education classes at the college's Literacy Outreach Centre.

He needed basic upgrading before starting the Level 2 and 3 programs. Mina asked if she could go with Clyde to the Literacy Centre. Both Mina and Clyde completed their basic training in one month. Then they took Level 2 and 3 courses.

"At first I wasn't coming," says Clyde. "It was something I always wanted to do, but I didn't have the nerve to go back to school. I didn't want to leave the house."

Clyde remembers the fears he had when he first walked into the school. An instructor gave Clyde a biology book. Clyde put it in his desk and left it there for three months. He wasn't interested in



*Mina and Clyde Tibbo believe teamwork will help them succeed.*

biology, but he soon became a "cracker jack" in math. "Math was our friend," says Clyde. "Then, when I started the biology, I said the heck with the math."

There were times when Clyde wanted to give up, but Mina kept pushing him to continue. Clyde says, "Almost every day I'd say I was going to quit. I would go home with a headache. That was just me putting pressure on myself."

Getting the highest mark became a game between Mina and Clyde. "He would try to get higher marks than me and I would try to get higher marks than him," says Mina.

This friendly competition made Clyde want to do better. "I used to tell him that if you're going to do anything you've got to have confidence," says Mina.

The Tibbos had to leave family and friends behind in Harbour Breton and move to Grand Falls-Windsor. They received a travel allowance and their regular TAGS income. They had to find an apartment and enroll their children in school at Grand Falls-Windsor.

"I used to tell them that I was going home to Harbour Breton," says Clyde. "They would say, 'Dad you're not going home. you're going to school. Dad, if you can stick with it, then we can stick with it.'"

Mina admits the move to Grand Falls-Windsor was hard. There were times when they wanted to pack their bags and return to Harbour Breton. "It's been the biggest challenge of my life," says Mina.

Friends and family in Narbour Breton told Mina and Clyde they would be home within a month. That was two years ago. When they return home people still don't believe they completed Level 3. "I feel like I was handed a million dollars," says Mina about her diploma.

Mina and Clyde had their sights set on success from the moment they enrolled in the Level 1 program. They needed 36 credits to receive their diploma. Now that they have completed Level 3, their dream is to run a funeral home.

Nothing came easy for Mina and Clyde and trying to become a funeral director wasn't any different. They needed 40 hours of training at a funeral home before they could apply for the funeral director training course. It took almost a year to complete the 40-hour job training. The Tibbos have applied for a funeral director's course in Nova Scotia and hope to be accepted in 1996. They are enrolled in a wildlife officer course, but they haven't given up on their dream of becoming funeral directors. As Mina says, "We'll never give up."

Clyde and Mina say they can understand people being afraid to go back to school. They believe many TAGS people are afraid to enroll in classes. The Tibbos' success has encouraged some of their friends to enter training programs. They believe that people who really want to upgrade their education can do so if they set their mind to it.

*What has the fish plant got to offer? I deserve better than a Level 3 education and work in the fish plant."*

**- Mina Tibbo**

*It was something I always wanted to do, but I didn't have the never to go back to school. I didn't want to leave the house.*

**- Clyde Tibbo**

**To Answer:**

1. Mina and Clyde talk about leaving school. If you left school without graduating, why did you do so?
2. How important do you think Mina and Clyde's relationship is in their success?
3. What do you think Mina means when she says she deserves more than a Level 3 education and work in the fish plant?
4. Clyde says he was nervous about going back to school. Why do you think he was nervous?
5. What are Clyde's and Mina's career plans?
6. Can you see yourself working as a funeral director? Can you see yourself working outside the fishery?

## Chapter 2

# Making sacrifices

It isn't easy to plan for a future outside the fishery. A husband and a wife need to talk it over. Curtis Randell of Bonavista worked in the fish plant at Port Union before the moratorium. Now Curtis and his wife have to make some hard decisions.

In 1992 the federal government said the fishery would be closed. Curtis and his wife wondered what to do. Each night they talked about their situation. They worried about a future for their 11-year-old daughter.



*Curtis Randell enjoys his training program.*

Curtis says, "I didn't want to sit back. I already sat back two years. Then they came out and said the fishery would be closed for another five years.

I realized that I was only 30 years old and I had to do something. That's when I decided to make the step. I went into the TAGS office, sat down with my counsellor, went over some courses and ended up here." Curtis signed up for a refresher course at the Provincial Learning Centre in Bonavista.

"Every day I'd be sitting down and saying the plant is not going to open anymore. I'd ask myself, 'Where do I go from here?' So one day I sat down with my wife and she said to me. 'You know, Curtis, the fishery is not going to be there. You've got to do something.' So I decided to go to my TAGS counsellor and see what courses were available."

Curtis says, "I was pretty scared about coming back to school. Once you get started, it's good to get back to school. You get the feeling that you're doing something."

The family had to make sacrifices for Curtis to return to school. Curtis had to leave his wife and daughter behind for eight months while he did an oil burner mechanic course in Corner Brook.

"That was my biggest concern," he says. "My wife was working back home and I had to leave her with my little girl.

It's hard because you've always got the feeling you could be home doing something. My wife has got to do everything while I'm here. This was one of the winters we had a lot of snow back home. She had to get our little girl to school and go to work herself. It was a big responsibility for her."

Curtis and his friend Jerry made the six to eight hour drive from Corner Brook to Bonavista every Friday. Curtis would spend Saturday with his family before returning to



Corner Brook on Sunday morning.

"When you have a family you want to get back home," he says. "It was pretty hectic. The thing that helped me was the support I had from my wife."

It's hard being away from home, but Curtis says he's glad he returned to school. "I'm glad that I got the second chance to go back to school and take a course," he says. "If you haven't got an education, you've got nothing when it comes to finding a job."

Curtis made a lot of money working at the plant. He says some of his friends are waiting, hoping the fishery will come back so they can make that kind of money again.

"When I went to work at the plant, it was a good idea because the money was there," he says. "Instead of spending money going to school, I figured I'd make money and probably, down the road, I'd go back to school. But once you get into the workforce and the money is coming in, you don't realize you should be going back to school. It's not in your mind, especially when you're bringing in good money and living in your home town."

Curtis knows Bonavista may never have the jobs it once did. He doesn't want to leave his home town but he will move to find work if he has to. Curtis and Jerry might even start a business in Bonavista if they can't find work.

"If I could get out of TAGS tomorrow, I'd be satisfied," he says. "If I can finish this course, get my on-the-job training and get a job offer, then I'll just close the door on TAGS. It's a good thing this TAGS did come about in one way. A lot of us who did want to go back could go back and do something."

Some people are afraid to take a course because they fear they will be forced out of the fishery. Curtis says he won't be out of the fishery until he gets a job.

"I don't want to be cut from TAGS as soon as I finish school," Curtis says. "Let's face it, jobs are not plentiful. I'm not the type of person to sit down and say, 'Fine, I've got a course.' That's what TAGS wanted from me. First when they came out they said everyone would have to do something."

You had to go to school or you had to do some kind of a program. A lot of people done that just to get TAGS off their back. When I get this done I'm not just going to sit back and wait until TAGS is gone. If I sit back for the next five or six years I'd waste my time and their money," he says.

Curtis did on-the-job training in Grand Falls-Windsor after he finished the course. He hopes to find work as an apprentice oil burner mechanic.

"I'm glad I did do it," says Curtis. "I've got no regrets. You almost feel proud of yourself for what you've done. The hardest thing is trying to keep the family together."

**To Answer:**

1. 1. What do you think Curtis and his wife talked about when they discussed their future?
2. 2. How did Curtis get back in school?
3. 3. Why did Curtis go to work in the fish plant?
4. 4. Do you agree with Curtis when he says, "If you haven't got the education, you've got nothing when it comes to finding a job."
5. 5. What reason does Curtis give for people being afraid to take a course?

## Chapter 3

# Believing in something

Jerry Russell's life changed forever when his father retired from the mining company in Buchans.

That was in 1974. Jerry's father wanted to return to his home town of Bonavista.

Jerry says, "It didn't bother me all that much when I moved to Bonavista. There I wasn't much in Buchans. I fell behind in school and failed a few times. I guess it was the crowd that was hanging around with me."



Jerry went to school for one year in Bonavista. "I was 19 when I went to Bonavista. When I got there, I had the best kind of marks. I didn't know that many people in Bonavista and didn't have much to do. That's probably why I did so well in school."

Jerry quit in Grade 9 and moved to St. John's. He got a job as a construction worker. A few years later, Jerry returned to Bonavista and got a job at the Catalina fish plant. He worked there for nearly 18 years. "I figured I was set for life in regards to a job," he says. "I got a wife and two children. I've got a house built and we were just saving a bit of money to go on a trip. Then, all of a sudden, bang, it's all gone and you've got to start from scratch again."

"I came back to school to try and get back on my feet. I used to be sitting down thinking about what I was going to do and where I was going to go? Almost every place is alike. You talk to people and there's just no work around, especially with us fellows. I didn't have much education. I had my Grade 9 but I didn't have a trade."

Jerry didn't have a full education, but he had a good job. "The money was excellent in the fishery," he says. "If you had gone around Catalina and Bonavista you'd see young fellows with new cars. But you don't see it now."

Jerry wanted to return to the fish plant because of the money. "Politicians said the fishery would reopen in two years. I decided I'd wait around for a few years because I had a lot of time in the Catalina plant. I figured if it opened I would get back. But then I heard it was going to stay closed for another five years. I'm getting up in age so I decided I'd better start doing something now."

Jerry had to leave his family behind when he went to Corner Brook to study. "It's hard," he says. "I've been married since 1979. To just get up and leave the family for a year is something you've got to think about. Before I came here I had to do upgrading. I had to

go back to school for five months. It was bad enough just thinking about that."

Jerry and his wife talked about their future. "We used to sit down some nights when the youngsters were gone to bed and talk about getting out and finding something." Jerry thought about taking a three-year marine diesel course but some people told him it was too hard. He spoke with Curtis Randell, who told Jerry he might find work as an oil burner mechanic. "I thought about what he said for six months, then I made up my mind to go for this course," he says.

Jerry and Curtis became friends while serving with the local volunteer fire department. They also worked together in the fish plant. They decided to take the same course in Corner Brook and share travel and housing costs.

"Curtis was talking about going in for nursing assistant and I mentioned to him about taking this course. I said when we finish we might be able to start a business between us. There's not much around this area but we could go over there and help each other by splitting the cost and everything else."

Sharing costs with a friend has made it easier to be away from home. "The buddy system is a lot better than being alone because you've got someone to talk to all the time," says Jerry. "When you're away from your youngsters, it's hard."

Jerry says, "If I could find a half-decent paying job in St. John's I would throw it all down in Bonavista. Bonavista is a nice spot to live. If I didn't have to move there's no way I would move. I've got my own house and I'm settled there. For me to move to St. John's I would have to rent and it would be costly. There's a lot to look at."

Jerry doesn't think he'll return to the fish plant. "The fishery is finished," he says. "It took five hundred years to ruin it. It's not going to come back in five or fourteen years. There are fellows who got five and six years in the Catalina plant who know there's no hope. They're not going to get back. They've got a chance of a lifetime to get a trade. There are fellows sitting at home. It don't make sense to me. If you don't try you're not going to know."

Jerry says, "Some TAGS people are afraid to take courses. They fear they will be out of the fishery after their course is finished. People said if you trained, you'd be taken out of the fishery. I've been talking to union fellows from St. John's and they were telling me no. You've got to take someone's word. You just can't go by talk. Probably that's what a lot of those people are doing who aren't doing anything. They're going by what other people are saying. The way I look at it is that the fishery is gone. We've got to do something."

**To Answer:**

1. How hard was it for Jerry and Curtis to leave their families behind?
2. Do you think it would be easier to go to school if you had a friend like Jerry or Curtis?
3. Jerry would move to St. John's if he had a higher paying job. How much money would you have to make to live in a larger town? Discuss.
4. What does Jerry mean when he says, "Then, all of a sudden, bang, it's all gone and you've got to start from scratch again?"

## Chapter 4

# Planning a future

People take training programs for different reasons. Irene enrolled in an ABE program to improve her education. Later, she did a course in business administration.

"I won't find work here, but anything could happen," she says. "I'm in my 40s and my husband could die. I could divorce, or we could move to a bigger place." Irene has two children in university. She saw a chance to finish her education after the fishery closed.

"People think it's easy for me just because I'm a teacher's wife," she says. "I quit school in Grade 10 and found a job. After I married I moved to a fishing community and got a job at the local fish plant. I worked there for 13 years."

Irene was surprised when the moratorium was announced. She didn't wait to see if the plant would reopen. She signed up for adult basic education classes.

The school couldn't give her the 16 credits she needed, so she signed up for a program at the local college.

"I always wanted to do a business course," says Irene. "I decided to enroll in a business administration program offered by the college."

"I used to say I can't, but I don't say that anymore," she says. "When you haven't done anything else, how else can you feel? If I realized I was capable of doing as well as I've done, I would have done it a lot sooner. You can do a lot of things that you think you can't."

"The TAGS program has given me a chance to do something I always wanted to do," says Irene. "I didn't take the course just because it was paid for by government. The opportunity was there and I grabbed it."

Irene encourages other TAGS people to continue their education. "How can I stress it strong enough?" she asks. "Now is the time. If you don't do it now, you will have to do it on your own when TAGS is over. I can't stress it enough for the younger ones to go and do something."

**To Answer:**

1. Why did Irene go back to school?
2. Irene says, "If I realized I was capable of doing as well as I've done, I would have done it a lot sooner." What do you think she means?
3. Irene is in her 40s. Do you think this is too old to go back to school? Discuss.
4. How has the TAGS program helped you go back to school?

*"The TAGS program has given me a chance to do something I always wanted to do. I didn't take the course just because it was paid for by government. The opportunity was there and I grabbed it."*

**-Irene**

## Chapter 5

# Running a business

Linda Kinden stands behind the counter serving coffee, subs, chips and bars. She sways to and fro as the ferry, *Beaumont Hamel*, cuts its way through the slob ice surrounding Fogo Island. Linda could find plenty of reasons to complain, but she doesn't look at the bad things in life. She serves a smile with every steaming cup of coffee.

It's late April and Linda and Brian Kinden have been operating the canteen for nearly two months. The long hours aboard the ferry have been hard on their family life. "We've got to make sacrifices if we want to run our own business," she says.



*Linda Kinden speaks with a passenger.*

Each morning the Kindens take turns working in the canteen. They arrive at the boat at 6:30 a.m. and sail back and forth from Farewell to Change Islands and Fogo Island until 8:30 p.m. "We've got no life, we just meet in passing," Linda laughs.

"I worked at the plant in Joe Batts and in Fogo," she says. "I worked as a trimmer and weigher. I loved working there." Brian also worked in the fish plant. When the moratorium was announced they were both out of work.

Linda says, "At first I was concerned about the fish plant closing. I wasn't expecting the fishery to collapse. I never dreamed that was going to happen."

Brian was one of the lucky ones. He had completed his Grade 11 and could take other training. Linda left school in 1977. She had to complete an adult basic education program.

"I just gave it up," she says. "I regretted it then and I still do. I always wanted to go back to school but I had a family to raise. I also had a good job and was making good money. My TAGS counsellor told me I had to go to school or retrain. I was game to give it a try. I didn't want to sit at home waiting for the next cheque to arrive."

Linda says, "I had my Grade 10 so I only needed 22 credits. I signed up with the FFAW/CAW but they didn't offer credits so I signed up with the Career Academy in May 1993. It was an excellent opportunity. I completed my Level 3 program in December 1993."

Brian also went back to school. He signed up for a 10 month cooking course at Gander.



"It was hard having him away at Gander all week but we got used to it," says Linda. "I had to be both mother and father."

Linda says, "After I finished school I said, 'Where do I go next?' There was a lot of uncertainty. I had my Grade 12 but I didn't know what I was going to do. It all fell in place when the tender came up."

Linda saw an ad in the local newspaper. The provincial government was looking for someone to run a canteen on the Fogo Island ferry. "Nobody applied when the job was first published," says Linda. "After some heart-to-heart discussions, we decided to apply."

"We completed a business plan and submitted it to our TAGS counsellor." she says. "We received funding through the TAGS Self Employment Assistance (SEA) program. We will still receive our full TAGS benefit during the first year. In the second year we have to report our earnings. We can still qualify for TAGS if our income from the canteen is low."

Linda says, "It's been hard having my husband away from home, going back to school and starting a business, but it's been satisfying. People shouldn't be afraid to take chances. Go for whatever you can and make the sacrifices."

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**To Answer:**

1. Why didn't Linda return to school?
2. Did you ever consider starting a business?
3. How does the Self Employment Assistance program work? Discuss.
4. Linda says, "People shouldn't be afraid to take chances." Do you agree?

"We've got to make sacrifices if we want to run our own business."

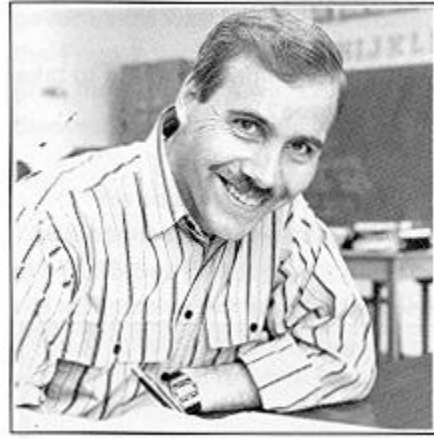
**-Linda Kinden**

## Chapter 6

# Courage to go back

Melvin Gillard and his family have to make many tough decisions. Melvin was born and raised in Twillingate. He thought he would always work at the local fish plant.

Melvin says, "Everything was sailing right along, no problem with anything. Then came the either leave or go on in the fish plant. Now he has returned to get his Level 3. "I quit school in Grade 7 to work in the fishery," he says.



*Melvin Gillard is willing to work hard.*

"It was a bit of money on hand. Everybody does the same thing. I grabbed the chance but in the end it failed."

Melvin regrets leaving school, especially now that the fishery is closed. "The money and work were there." he says. "Nobody knew this was going to happen."

"If you don't get an education, then you've got nothing," Melvin says. "My TAGS counsellor asked me if I wanted more training in the fishery, but that's no good without an education. I just came back to school on my own. I know I need more education."

Going to school hasn't been easy. Melvin says, "This is the worst time of the year. I love it in the woods and enjoy cutting firewood. I'm used to going back to work in May. That's my energy."

Melvin also enjoys school. He says, "There are some days when I'm down in the blues. That's the way of life. There are many days when I feel like I want to quit."

Melvin remembers his first day in class. "When I started, I started with nothing," he says. "It's an excellent program. The instructors are excellent. They help you every way in the world."

"It's a hard move to make after being out of school," says Melvin. "It's only a couple of months and you're back into it again. A lot of people won't try this school racket. They're out there but they haven't got the courage to go back."

Melvin hopes to complete Level 3. He gets support from his wife and two children. Their daughter Rhonda is 17. She will complete her Grade 12 next year. Rhonda plans to study law. "She helps me with my homework," says Melvin, "and now I can help my son Dwayne with his."

Melvin will receive TAGS funding until December 1998. He plans to stay in school. The family may move after his daughter graduates.

**To Answer:**

1. How long did Melvin think he would work at the fish plant? How long did you think you would work at your job?
2. Melvin says there are days when he would like to quit. Have you felt this way? Discuss.
3. Melvin says, "My counsellor asked me if I wanted more training in the fishery, but that's no good without an education." Do You agree?

## Chapter 7

### Positive attitude

Guy Morey enjoyed working at the fish plant in Triton.

He worked there for nearly 20 years. Now he is training to work as a nursing assistant.

"I'm giving up on the fish plant because I don't see the fishery coming back," he says. "I probably wouldn't get much work even if the fish plant did reopen."

"While I worked in the fish plant I wanted something different," he says. "In the back of my mind I wanted to be around people. I'm a people person. I like being around people."



*Guy Morey is willing to make sacrifices.*

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After he graduated from high school Guy went to work at the fish plant. He thought he would work there forever. The workers didn't have a union when Guy went to work at the plant. He was making \$3.05 an hour. When Guy left the plant, he was making more than \$10 an hour.

He didn't know what to do when the fishery closed. "I felt like I was getting paid for doing nothing even though work was hard to get," Guy says. "I wanted to do something, but I didn't know what, or even how to get at it."

Guy was nervous about being out of work. He was also nervous about going back to school. "I've surprised myself all the way through," he says. "Deep down I thought I could do it. You have to have a positive attitude"

He enjoys school but says, "It hasn't been easy. I've really worked hard. I guess there's a price to pay for everything."

Each Monday morning he makes the 45-minute drive to Springdale. He stays there until Friday. "I wouldn't be doing as well as I am if I had stayed home and drove to school every day," Guy says.

He has two children. They stay at home with his wife. "She didn't mind me leaving home because she knew it was something I had to do. My wife has to be mother and father to our five-year-old daughter and eleven-year-old son."

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She has to get them ready for school, keep wood in the fire and shovel snow. I've got no worries about home. I know everything is under control."

The children miss their dad. "When Friday comes they're very excited," he says. "The girl misses me more than the boy. The boy wants to be a big boy and not show Dad he misses him."

Guy would like to work as a nursing assistant in Springdale. He says, "Why not me? There's got to be people for those kinds of things. I'd rather change bed pans than dump caplin guts. I think I was cut out for something like that."

**To Answer:**

1. Why is Guy giving up on the fish plant?
2. Guy says he's a "people person." Would you like working with people?
3. Do you think having a positive attitude is important for a learner? Discuss.
4. What are Guy's career goals? How are they similar to yours?

## Chapter 8

# Following a Dream

Some people find it hard to go back to school. That's the way it was for Norma.

Norma grew up in a small, isolated fishing community.

She says she always saw herself as being stupid. Both her parents had speech and hearing problems. "This made school even harder for me," she says.

In 1968 Norma walked out of her Grade 9 class. She told herself that she wasn't going back. Norma was in her second year of Grade 9. She had failed the year before. She hoped it would be easier the second time, but the school changed its literature program. Norma couldn't keep up with the other students.

She got married after leaving school. Her main concern was caring for her husband and children. Her husband left the fishery in the 1970s to work as a carpenter. Norma took a job in 1984 at the local fish plant.

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"We're down to one income," says Norma. "My husband isn't getting much work now. I didn't realize the closure would be as bad as it is. You have to live it to realize it." Norma and her husband may have to leave their community to find work.

Norma always wanted to be a hairdresser. She wanted to go back to school but she was afraid. "It's hard to study after being out of school for so long," she says. "I enjoy every minute of school. I enjoy coming here, but I still don't like English."

Norma also enjoys studying at home. She gets plenty of help from her husband and daughter. Norma says her daughter helps with her homework. She also has a son. "My son works in Alberta. He always asks how I'm doing in school."

Norma finished her Level 2 program in June 1995. She hopes to complete Level 3. She would also like to follow her dream and take a hairdresser course.

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**To Answer:**

1. Did you feel like Norma felt when you were in school?
2. Which subject was hardest for you in school?
3. What was your favourite subject?
4. Norma says her husband isn't getting much work as a carpenter because of the moratorium. How has the moratorium hurt other businesses? Discuss.
5. When Norma says, "I didn't realize the closure would be as bad as it is. You have to live it to experience it." What does she mean?
6. Did you ever dream of working at hairdressing, carpentry or some other job?

## Chapter 9

# The rubber boots story



*John Hynes would rather be fishing.*

"... And I jumped into bed with me rubber boots on." They did not write "The Rubber Boots Song" about John Hynes of New Ferolle. But John used to go to bed wearing his shirt, his rubber boots and pants. John says, "When I was old enough to go out in a boat, I was out in a boat. I didn't exactly do a lot but I was out. I used to go to bed with my clothes and rubber boots on to make sure I wouldn't miss it.

You had to be ready for four or five o'clock."

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John's father and grandfather were fishermen. John had hoped to make a living from the sea. He quit school in Grade 10 to go lobster fishing.

"The old man said he'd like for me to finish school. But if you don't like being there, then I'm not going to make you stay there.' I quit and went fishing. If there was anything to fish I wouldn't be here now," he says. "I'd rather fish than do anything else in the world. It's hard work but there it is."

John's father is 52 years old. He still catches herring and lobster. John would rather fish for cod, but he doesn't see a future in the fishery.

"Like the old man told me, 'You might stay in it and you might make a half decent living for the rest of your life.' Then again, it's not looking good for the future."

John says, "Leaving New Ferolle doesn't really bother me. There wasn't much in the community to start with. It wouldn't bother me now to leave the island. It's like everything else. You've got to look at what you can make money at and what you can pay bills with. I've got a son and a girlfriend. She couldn't get any work down home. It was only my income. The future for fishing didn't look that bright."

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I've got to try to do something with a little bit of a future in it. not only for my sake, but for my son's sake."

John is taking a course in Corner Brook. He says he would like to find work there. His girlfriend already has a job.

John has a house in New Ferolle. "I guess I won't be moving back there any more," he says. "I could sell my house but I probably won't get much for it down home. It's no good to board it up because it only spoils."

John plans to apply for an electrical course after he completes his oil burner mechanic course. "It will kind of tie in to what I'm doing now because we're not allowed to hook up a furnace to a new house. You've got to be an electrician. To do anything with electricity you're going to have to be an electrician. I spoke to some people in the oil business and they said it would be an asset."

John would rather be working than getting TAGS. "You'd have to be crazy to turn down the TAGS money. I'd much rather be working. I'm like everybody, I suppose. I get days when I really don't want to do anything, but I'm no good for being home in the house all the time."

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**To Answer:**

1. Why did John leave school?
2. What are John's career plans?
3. John loved to fish. Do you think he will miss fishing? Do you miss your job in the fishery?
4. What are your childhood memories of the fishery? Would you like your children to work in the fishery?

"It wouldn't bother me to leave the island. It's like everything else. You've got to look at what you can make money at and what you can pay bills with."

**- John Hynes**

## Chapter 10

# Against all odds

Joan raised a family and lived a quiet life. She fished with her husband part of the season and received unemployment insurance during the other months. She knew the fishery wouldn't last forever as the catches were getting smaller. In 1989 her husband sold his boat and went Fishing with her first cousin. The following year her husband bought a smaller boat and Joan went back fishing with him.

She left school in Grade 10. "I wasn't encouraged enough. I had low self-esteem," she says. "Teachers made me feel so low. I just didn't care so I went to work in Corner Brook. I regretted quitting school and always wanted to return, but I always had a reason not to go back. My family came first and then I went to work with my husband," she says.

Joan signed up for an adult basic education class, but tragedy soon struck. Her son had been drinking and hit a man with the family car. The accident left the man in a coma.

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### To Answer:

1. What reasons does Joan give for quitting school?
2. Compare your school experience to Joan's.
3. How does Joan feel about quitting school today?
4. Do you agree with Joan returning to school after the accident?
5. How do you think Joan felt when she returned to school after the accident?

"Your failures always bring out positive points."

- Joan

## Chapter 11

# Good years ahead



*Cyril Skinner is planning for the future.*

Cyril Skinner worked in the Burgeo fish plant for he'd work there until he retired. He owned his own home, raised a family, and planned to stay in Burgeo.

I was there so many years that I didn't think anything would happen to the fishery," says Cyril. That changed in 1992 when Fisheries Minister John Crosbie said the fishery would be closed for two years. Cyril thought he'd be back working in the fish plant in a couple of years. That didn't happen and" Cyril's hopes of going back to the plant soon faded.

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Cyril was born in Richard's Harbour. There weren't any roads leading to his community. The only way out was by water. He went to a one-room school where the teacher taught Kindergarten to Grade 8. "After Grade 8 you didn't have much choice but to go somewhere. I left home and went to Port aux Basques to take Grade 9," he

says.

Cyril received a bursary from the provincial government to go to school in Port aux Basques. "When I finished school, I had Grade 10," he says. "That was pretty good learning then. I didn't have a chance like they've got today. I didn't come from a really fortunate family. My parents had to work hard and didn't have much money. They couldn't afford to put me through school."

Cyril is 49 years old. He would like to work as an oil burner mechanic. He feels he has at least "16 good years" left to work. "That's too long to lie around when you don't know what's going to happen. I had the chance to go to school and get the courses I'm interested in. I'm not saying that I'll get a job, but at least if a job comes up, then I can apply for it. I couldn't before. I could have stayed home on TAGS and got paid for it, but I've got too many years ahead of me."

Cyril doesn't want to wait for the plant to reopen. "The plant is closed," says Cyril. It could be five years, it could be 10 years, it could be forever. I just can't stay around here and wait for something that's probably not going to happen."

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Cyril was accepted on an oil burner mechanic course at Academy Canada. Cyril and his wife left their home in Burgeo and moved to Corner Brook. They shared an apartment with their son. He was going to college there. Cyril and his wife have four children. The youngest graduated from high school in June 1995.

"I found going back to school was hard for the first month because I've been out for so long," Cyril says. "After I got into it, I loved it."

Cyril finished the course with the second-highest marks in his class. "There are some pretty smart students here," he says. "When I came here, I came here to learn something. I didn't come here to waste time."

Cyril would like to take another course through the TAGS program. But, the new course has to be related to the oil burner mechanic course. "Some people may say why is he taking a different course down here? He's just using the system. But I'm not here for that. I'm trying to get something out of it."

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**To Answer:**

1. Where was Cyril born? Discuss what it would be like to live in an isolated community.
2. Discuss Cyril's statement, "I was there so many years that I didn't think anything would happen to the fishery."
3. What type of school did Cyril attend?
4. What reasons does Cyril give for leaving school?
5. Cyril says he has at least "16 good years left to work." How many more years would you like to work?
6. How did you feel when the fishery closed?

"I was there so many years that I didn't think anything would happen to the fishery."

**- Cyril Skinner**

## Chapter 12

# Twenty-six credits in seven months

Pat Rogers of Twillingate was a fish plant worker. She had a Grade 7 education. Soon she will be a bank teller with a Level 3 diploma.

Pat received her diploma in June 1995. It marked the end of a lot of hard work and sacrifice. "If I'm doing something or going after something, then I can do it," says Pat. "I completed the program with a 94 per cent average."



*Pat Rogers wants to work as a bank teller.*

Jesse Chaulk was Pat's instructor.

Jesse remembers how nervous Pat was when she started the program in October 1994. Jesse says, "Pat came in and said she didn't think she could do it. She had an upset stomach during the first few weeks, and she even lost weight."

Pat says, "It's difficult to go back when you've been out of school for 19 years. It wasn't too bad trying to study. It was harder just getting started. I think that's why a lot of people don't get back in school."

Pat hated high school and quit in 1975. "I've regretted it ever since. I tried night school but I didn't like it. I decided I would have to go to classes full-time to get an education. I need an education to get work."

She says, "Attending ABE classes isn't like high school. It's more relaxed. You're not under the same pressures and it's a different atmosphere. You can work at your own pace and take a test whenever you feel like it."

Pat set a goal for herself. She wanted to earn the 26 credits she needed by June 1995. "It seemed like a lot and I thought it would take longer," she says. "I surprised myself. I can't believe I've completed Level 3."

Pat plans to continue her education. "I wanted to take a course after I finished school," says Pat. "I didn't know if I wanted to take hairdressing or a bank teller's course."

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I spoke to Jesse about what I should do but she said I would have to make that decision."

Pat filled out an application for a hairdressing course. "I didn't say anything," says Jesse. "I knew Pat was better suited to working in a bank. That night I went home. When I got into bed all I could see were Pat's hands counting money. She's so right for that type of work. I was so relieved when Pat came into class the next day and said she had decided to enroll in the bank teller course "

Pat has a lot more confidence now. "They say you're never too old to learn," says Pat. "I think the older you are the better you can learn. People think they can't do it. but they can if they put their minds to it."

Pat hopes to find work as a bank teller when her course finished. "I'd like to work somewhere in Newfoundland or even on the mainland," she says. "It's scary thinking about going away, just like it's scary thinking about returning to school. People are waiting for the last moment to do something. Why wait for the last moment? Now is when you have to do these things."

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**To Answer:**

1. Why did Pat leave school?
2. How did Pat feel about returning to school?
3. What is Pat's career choice?
4. Pat says she has more confidence. Do you think improving your education will increase your confidence?
5. How does Pat feel about moving to the mainland.
6. Pat says, "The older you are the better you can learn." Do you agree? Discuss.

"It's difficult to go back when you've been out of school for 19 years. It wasn't too bad trying to study. It was harder just getting started. I think that's why a lot of people don't get back in school."

**- Pat Rogers**

## Chapter 13

# A second chance

Life couldn't have been much worse for Gar. Many years of drinking, fighting at home and trouble with the law caught up with him in 1992.

Gar is 48 years old. He is the oldest child in a big family. He has six brothers and four sisters. "I never really had a childhood," says Gar. "That is something I really regret. The old man got turned down by the doctors when I was a young boy. He couldn't work and almost lost everything he had. We had no choice but to get out on our own. If we wanted to quit school, we quit. There was no such thing as saying, 'We'd like for you to go to school.'"

Gar started fishing at an early age. "I spent most of my life fishing," he says. I left home when I was 13 years old and went fishing as a shareman. I worked on draggers, gillnetters, open boats, cod traps and salmon nets.

Gar says, "I was a drunk all of my life. I considered myself a man at age 13. I was out doing a man's work.

I didn't think I was a man unless I went drinking with the boys.

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It got to the point where I was getting to be a big boy and a big nuisance. I was making big money and spending big money while my family was home starving to death."

"My wife left me in 1992. That was my wake-up call. The fishery was gone and all of a sudden my family was gone. I couldn't handle it anymore. I was getting to be a nuisance to myself and to everybody else. Right now I've got two years probation hanging over my head and I have to do something about my drinking."

Gar had another problem. He didn't qualify for TAGS. He couldn't find work and had to go on welfare. He says it was hard. "I never really worked in the workforce, only fishing. When you look for a job on land, it's hard, especially for me with no education or anything. There wasn't too much to do and there still isn't too much to do." Gar was out of work when the fishery closed. He was accepted for the TAGS program after his application was reviewed. "I would be in a bad situation without my TAGS," he says.

"I reached rock bottom in 1992," says Gar. "Everything was gone. That's when I decided to get help. I spent a lot of time in jail. I was in and out for so many weeks at a time. My bosses used to wonder where I was and when I was going to get back." Gar knew he had to change his life. He told his probation officer, "Get me somewhere where I can get help."

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Now Gar says, "I've got a whole new life. I've been in AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) since 1993. I remarried and now I have a new life thanks to the support of my wife and friends at AA I wouldn't make it without them."

Gar knows that quitting school has caused many of his problems. "I regret quitting school, but I had no other choice. It was either go out to work or starve."

Today, Gar is back in school. For two years he wanted to take an adult basic education course but didn't know how to sign up. "I really found it hard coming back to school," says Gar. "It was hard for me to even think about coming in here. It's been a long hard haul to get where I am, but I think I can make it."

Gar didn't know his alphabet when he entered school last March. He couldn't read a road sign or a newspaper. "I used to feel embarrassed," he says. "I could write my name but I felt like I was in a world of my own. Now my wife writes out her grocery list and I can manage to go to the store. I could never do that. It's like I'm back to my childhood with a second chance."

Gar talks about how he used to feel. "I used to always put myself down and say that I couldn't do nothing. The past month or two that I've been in here I figure I can make it through if I punch hard enough at it."

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Gar says, "I really feel good about myself. I'm really proud of myself, especially getting where I have in a couple of years. I've got more respect for myself than I ever had. I was always putting myself down and other people put me down too. Right now I feel good about myself and whatever comes I take with a fairly good stride. I don't get frustrated and I don't get into any trouble."

Gar doesn't blame anyone else for the choices he made. He knows he's been down a few rough roads. He has advice for young people on how to stay away from making the same mistakes.

"Stay in school," he says. "If you've got no education there's nothing else in this world for you."

"I really found it hard coming back to school. It was hard for me to even think about coming in here. It's been a long haul to get where I am, but I think I can make it."

- Gar

**To Answer:**



1. How old was Gar when he left school?
2. What reasons does Gar give for leaving school?
3. Compare your life experiences to Gar's.
4. Have you ever felt embarrassed because you couldn't read?
5. Do you agree with Gar when he says, "If you've got no education there's nothing else in this world for you." Discuss.
6. How important is TAGS in people's lives?
7. What do you think life is like in prison?
8. How did drinking affect Gar's life?
9. Gar says, "I considered myself a man at age 13. I was out doing a man's job." How have times changed for young people? How old were you when you considered yourself an adult? Discuss.

## Chapter 14

# Years of desire

Netta Croucher always wanted to be a health-care worker. She missed one chance when she accepted a part-time job with the town of South Brook. She missed another chance when she took a job at the fish plant in Triton.

"I've always wanted to work as a nursing assistant," she says. "I always put my own dreams and goals on the back burner, especially where my four children were concerned. I was willing to wait because I always wanted the best for them.

Netta has an outgoing personality and a positive outlook on life. She enjoys helping people. "I guess you could say I'm a modern-day Florence Nightingale. I'm always cooking or house cleaning for sick friends and relatives."

Last year she cared for a friend who had cancer. "I cared for her and her family," says Netta. "I was there when she died. It's something I'll never forget."



*Netta Croucher is now a nursing assistant.*

Netta also cares for people in her home. "I took care of an elderly gentleman who was mentally ill."

Netta remembers when she got a call from the Central Newfoundland Regional College. Someone told her she had been accepted for the nursing assistant program in Springdale. "When I got off the phone I jumped all around the house and thanked God for the opportunity," she says. "There was no way I was neglecting myself anymore."

Netta has a grandmother at the senior citizens' home.

She visits her every Sunday. Netta also takes the time to speak to other residents. "I just love seniors," she says. "When I go there I visit everyone I know."

Netta would like to work in a senior citizens' home or on a children's ward after she completes her on-the-job training at the Central Newfoundland Regional Health Care Centre in Grand Falls-Windsor. "I just can't wait to start

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working on the floor," she says. "I've devoted so much time to being successful in this program and I'm eager to put the theory into practice."

Attending class hasn't been easy for Netta. "I have to drive from South Brook to Springdale every morning. That takes about a half hour," she says. "I have to make sure my two teenage children are ready for school in the morning, "make beds, start the laundry and tidy up the house. I also teach Sunday school and crafts. I enjoy making crafts in my spare time."

Netta gets money from the TAGS program. "It's less than I made at the fish plant," she says. Netta also gets money for travel costs. "It costs me an extra \$200 a month out of my own pocket to travel to Springdale," she says. "I've made many sacrifices to take this course. Life can be really stressful, but if I work hard I know I will be rewarded."

Netta has the support of her family and friends. My children offer me so much encouragement. They're always eager to know the marks I get on my exams. I'm like a high school student" she says. "I can't wait to get my hands on my diploma. Years of desire will go through my mind when I receive my diploma."

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**Update:**

Netta completed her course shortly after this interview. She now works as a nursing assistant at the Springdale Hospital.

**To Answer:**

1. Would you enjoy being a health-care worker?
2. What are some of your special skills or abilities?
3. What hobbies do you have?
4. How important is it for someone to receive support from family members?  
Discuss.

"I've always wanted to work as a nursing assistant. I always put my own dreams and goals on the back burner, especially where my four children were concerned. I was willing to wait because I always wanted the best for them.

**- Netta Croucher**

## Chapter 15

# Never too late

Some people think it's too late to go back to school at age 42. But Winston Heath of Fogo is sure he can finish his adult basic education program. He would also like to take other courses.



*Winston Heath is determined to finish the ABE program.*

"I started fishing in 1972 when I was 18 years old," he says. "I left school to work on a longliner. The money was good and the fish were plentiful."

Winston enjoyed working in the inshore fishery. He didn't enjoy the offshore fishery. "It used to take us four hours to reach the trench off Fogo. This is where we

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would fish. I used to get some sick," he says. "The boys would laugh at me. I still get sick when I go out that far."

Winston moved to Fort McMurray, Alberta in 1979 to work on the oil rigs. "I didn't like it up there," he says. "In 1981 I returned to Fogo Island and went to work in the inshore fishery. I fished with my two brothers. We had a 35 foot open boat. We used to set out cod traps off Shoal Bay, Deep Bay and Stone Island."

Winston remembers when there was plenty of fish. "I've got a picture of some men from Boston who wanted to see us haul our cod traps. They came to the wharf at five o'clock in the morning and went out with us. We caught about 10 barrels of fish. They were some excited. We'll never see those days anymore," says Winston.

"There was plenty of cod then. We'd catch about eight barrels of cod. We carried it in the pan of the pickup to the fish plant. The catches got smaller around 1986. It got so bad we barely caught enough to get our stamps."

Winston was confused when John Crosbie closed the fishery. "It was a shock," he says. "I didn't know what to think of it. When Crosbie said we would get \$225 a week, I didn't know how I was going to pay my bills. I thought I would have to go away. It wouldn't be any good for me to take a job that pays less than eight or ten dollars an hour."

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Winston took a small engine repair course in Lewisporte. "That's not much good to me," he says. "There's not much business here on Fogo Island for small engine repairs. Most fishermen do the work themselves." Winston returned to ABE to complete his Level 3. "I'd like to work as a wildlife officer, or at least work outdoors," he says.

Winston has a fishing license. He would like to sell it to the fisheries department, but he's afraid. "They might force my brothers to sell their licenses because we're partners," he says. "While I was in Lewisporte I kept my lobster license and had my brother fish for me. The fishery officers said I had to be in the boat. Me and my brothers bought the license. It cost \$1,200. I had to give up my license and my brother had to buy it again for another \$1,200."

Winston enjoys the ABE program. "I love it here," he says. "You can learn at your own pace."

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**To Answer:**

1. Why did Winston leave school?
2. Compare stories of large catches of fish to stories about empty nets? What happened? Discuss.
3. Winston says, "It wouldn't be any good for me to take a job that pays less than eight or ten dollars an hour?" Would you be able to move and take a job that pays less than eight dollars an hour?
4. Have you ever been to the mainland? How is it different from Newfoundland and Labrador?

How did you feel when John Crosbie said the fishery was closing? Discuss.

I started fishing in 1972 when I was 18 years old. I left school to work on a longliner. The money was good and the fish were plentiful.

**- Winston Heath**

## Chapter 16

# Fixing his mistakes

"When you're 16 years old, you think you know it all, but you really don't know anything," says Pratt Vincent. "I quit school to take a full-time job at the local fish plant in 1984. It was February. I was in Grade 10. I was getting a nice bit of work, making \$24,000 a year. In school you only had a couple of dollars a day for lunch money."

Pratt's mother also worked in the fish plant. His father was a logger. "When I was 16, I had my mind made up," Platt says. "There wasn't anything anybody could say to change it. I remember the evening I came home and said I was going to quit. I had been talking about it for six or seven months. I told Mom that when I came home that evening I was finished. 'That you never will,' she said. I walked out that morning and said, 'I'll be back this evening with my books.'"

"Things were different when I went to school than when Dad went. Dad was in his 50s when I went to school.

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My parents were reared up in hard times and had to leave school. I think a lot of people around that age thought that, 'If I came up without an education, my son or daughter can do it.' Education is stressed a bit more to people who got parents in their 30s or so."

Pratt blames himself for quitting school. "School wasn't a pain in the butt or anything. My mind used to wander and I'd think about what I was going to do that evening when I got out. I thought I was really macho. I was 16 years old and I didn't know A from B. Now I see my mistake. If it wasn't a mistake, I wouldn't be here today."

Pratt says, "Times were good and it seemed like the fishery would last forever. By the time I was 19 I had owned two new cars and two new motorcycles. Back then I used to look at my buddies going to university and say they haven't got anything. They have a few dollars a week to go out and enjoy themselves and the rest of the time they're in studying."

Today, Pratt has a different view of life. "I've got a \$60,000 house and I own it. People look at me and say, 'You don't know how good you've got it. You've got a new house and you own it.' But I'd sooner have a full-time job with a mortgage on my house than be without work. You have to work to have money. Just because you own a house doesn't make it any easier. If I want work I've got to take a trade or

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something and move on. I'm glad I've got my house, but it's the silliest thing I've ever done. If I knew what was going to take place when I got married, I would have rented

and that would have given me more encouragement to move on."

Pratt and his wife would like to stay in Triton. They may have no choice but to move. "I don't want to," says Pratt, "but if push comes to shove I've got to go. I'm not the first and I won't be the last."

Pratt is sorry he quit school. "While I was at the plant and everything was going good, I was never sorry for quitting," he says. "But when the topic of graduating would come up, I'd feel uncomfortable. There's not too many people who boast about dropping out of school. I never thought I'd go back to school. I found it hard returning to school. If I had enrolled in ABE when the fishery first closed I could have a trade completed. I had it in my mind all along to come back to school, but sometimes a fellow puts it off and puts it off."

"When I started I thought I had a long way to go for 36 credits," he says. "Now I'm over the hump and tipping the other way. I'm here now and I want my 36 credits. I know that you can't go back in time but I wish I had started before. When I get my diploma I know what will be going through my mind. I should have been doing this ten years ago."

Pratt hopes to finish Level 3 by the end of 1995.

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"I would like to take a trade but what trade I don't know," he says. "I don't want to take a trade and be gone for a year or two and end up back here with nothing. And, I don't want to take a trade where I'll only get 15 to 20 weeks work. I want to work all year round."

Pratt says, "People should take advantage of the chance to take courses through TAGS. Sometimes I wondered if I could do it. At first I was afraid to come, afraid that I wouldn't be able to do it. In school you had to be quiet, but here you can have your laugh if you want. We're not being treated like students; we're adults."

Pratt says, "We're the most fortunate people in the world. I've got brothers who work in the woods and if they get out of work, they're out of luck."

"There's not too many people who boast about dropping out of school. I never though I'd go back.

**- Pratt Vincent**

**To Answer:**

1. Why did Pratt leave school?
2. How do you think Pratt's parents felt when he left school?
3. What would you say to your child if he or she talked about dropping out of school?
4. Pratt says things were different when his parents went to school. Do you think education is more important today than years ago? Why?
5. Pratt says, "Now I see my mistake. If it wasn't a mistake I wouldn't be here today." Do you feel you made a mistake quitting school? Discuss.
6. How has Pratt's attitude changed towards school?
7. Pratt says he should have started an ABE program sooner than he did. Do you wish you had started sooner?



## Chapter 17

# From outpost to city



*Irene Ryland would like to find work in St. John's.*

It's a long way from L'Anse-au-Loup to St. John's. L'Anse-au-Loup is a tiny, quiet community on the southern shore of Labrador. Irene Ryland was born at Red Bay but has lived in L'Anse-au-Loup most of her life. Now she goes to school in St. John's.

Many changes have happened in Irene's life since she enrolled in an ABE course in April 1993. She graduated from the ABE program in January 1995. Then she moved to St. John's to take a 15 month computer accounting course.

Irene says, "It's John's a big change in lifestyle from living in L'Anse-au-Loup.

There are so many changes - like the weather and being able to go to the store and get what you need. At home you could get what you needed, but you couldn't just go to a store and pick it up. There's a lot of difference in the prices of groceries. It's a whole different lifestyle. I love it here."

Irene and her husband have a house in L'Anse-au-Loup. She says, "Home is where you make it. My two daughters are working in St. John's and my son is here going to school. This made it easier for us to move here."

"I wouldn't move back to Labrador if I could get a job here. The only way I would go back is if I can't get a job here. If I can't get a job then I've got no choice but to go back. If the plant reopens I've got to go back to go to work."

Irene was a seasonal worker in the L'Anse-au-Loup fish plant from 1980 until 1994. Her job involved filleting and packaging fish. "I enjoyed having a job. I can't say I really liked that kind of work." Now, Irene wants to work in an office.

Irene quit school in Grade 9 in the mid-1960s. "Many times I said when the kids finished school I would go back. I didn't really believe it, but I always said I would. I also said I would go back to school when my second youngest graduated, but I didn't. So, when my youngest finished, I went back.

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If I had followed my mind I would have been back few years before that and I would be finished now."

Irene says, "Returning to school was hard. I never really felt like giving it up. I had some doubts when I first went back. I knew I could do it because I had a lot of support from my family and instructors."

Irene did part of her ABE course at the Labrador College. She completed it at the FFAW Centre in L'Anse-au-Loup. "Having to get 36 credits seemed like a long way to go," she says.

"I can't believe how much I've accomplished in such a short period of time."

**To Answer:**

1. Irene says she would like to move to St. John's. Would you like to move to another community? Discuss.
2. There have been a lot of changes in Irene's life since the moratorium started. What are some of the changes in your life?
3. Irene says one of the differences between living in an outport and living in a city is being able to buy whatever you need at a store. What are some other differences you'll find? Discuss.

## Chapter 18

# Support and encouragement

Madeline Card needed 24 credits when she enrolled in Academy Canada's Adult Basic Education class in Twillingate. She had visited Ida Reid. Ida is a TAGS counsellor in Newville. She encouraged Madeline to go back to school.



*Madeline Card says she got a lot of support.*

"I felt quite discouraged at that time," Madeline says. "I didn't know what to do with my life or where I was heading. Ida asked me what I wanted to do. I said, 'I want to try to better myself, but I am not very smart.'"

"Ida tried very hard to encourage me," says Madeline. "She also told me

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### Support and encouragement

about a computer program called PLATO that could help you improve your education. I jumped at the chance because this was something I was looking for."

Madeline lived at home with her mother. She attended classes for a few hours each day for three months. Madeline thought about quitting after her mother became ill.

"We were living by ourselves, so I really had no one to help me out at home," she says. "My sister told me she would look after my mother for me."

"I went back to see Ida a few times. She told me they were starting ABE classes at Twillingate for people on NCARP who would like to get their Level 3 diploma. I gave her my name for the program at the Island Training Centre."

Madeline remembers how she felt. "When I received my call from Ida to attend classes at the centre in March 1993 I felt so good. I was finally doing something for myself. No one was pushing me into it. I wanted to and that made a whole lot of difference."

Madeline says, "My instructors at the centre were Jessie Chaulk and Warrick Butt. I found them to be very good with all their students. Jessie encouraged me from the first class she taught. I hated English even in day school as a child. Jessie helped me to love it. Twelve of my thirty-six credits were in English," Madeline says.

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Going to classes wasn't always easy. "So many times I wanted to quit and walk out the door because I felt I just didn't have what it took to be able to get my Level 3 diploma. But Jessie was always on my toes telling me that I had to believe in myself before anyone else could. She told me that she believed I could do it. And, she was right. On June 25 I graduated with my Level 3 diploma."

Madeline wanted to continue with her education. "I didn't waste any time so I enrolled in a micro-computer specialist program. It was an eleven-month program. I found it very hard because my upgrading was very fast and I had to learn a lot in that short period of time."

Madeline also had problems at home. Her mother was in poor health. Madeline again thought about quitting. "A few days later my sister volunteered to look after my mother once again. I carried on with my course. I graduated on July 8, 1994."

"I would encourage anyone to go back to school and get a part out of life that you may have always wanted. If you don't believe in yourself there are people out there to help you believe in yourself. If I can do it then so can others. Take this golden opportunity while you are on the TAGS program to make something more of yourself."

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**To Answer:**

1. Who encouraged Madeline to go back to school? Did anyone encourage you to return to school?
2. Why did Madeline want to quit school? Compare this to your situation.
3. Madeline says she felt good about going to school and doing something for herself. Do you feel you're doing something for yourself by returning to school?
4. Have you ever felt like quitting school because the program seems too difficult? Discuss.

"I would encourage anyone to go back to school and get a part out of life that you may have always wanted. If you don't believe in yourself there are people out there to help."

**- Madeline Card**

## Chapter 19

# Learning at his own pace

Dennis looks young for his age. He is 32 years old. He grew up in an outport community and left school to work at the local fish plant.

"it was tough growing up in the outports, especially if you were skinny, the oldest in a large family and expected to be a man by age 13," says Dennis. "Education didn't mean a thing. My dad used to take me out of school. He would take me in the woods or take me out birdin' with him. That is where I lost my interest in education. I've got brothers and sisters who got their Grade 12. Because I was the oldest son, they looked upon me to do the things that had to be done."

"Discipline back then was by force, but now in our age it's not," says Dennis. "I went through the ropes the hard way, but I'm not a person to hold a grudge. I just forget it. Life's got to go on."

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Dennis remembers the good times. "A bunch of us would hang out all night down by the fish plant. We would wait for the fish heads to come down the chute. We'd cut the tongues out and sell them on the street. The bigger boys would push me down the line. I was the fourth or fifth biggest and I would take my place in line and catch the few heads the other boys would miss. Sometimes the rush of fish was so strong that it would sweep us into the chute. We would be wet and stinking of fish. I was making twenty-five dollars a day. The guys up in first place probably made one hundred dollars a day. That's where our roots started."

The work was hard but rewarding for Dennis. "You know how I got my first bike?" he asks. "I got my first bike when me and my buddy got jack caps and sold them to the plant in truck loads for one cent a pound. We weren't very big. We used to have to put a rope around our neck and carry a hand bar. It used to help our hands because our hands used to give out. We worked a full week like that and we made enough money to buy a bike each. It was two hundred and something dollars. It was a ten speed. That's how I got my first bike."

When Dennis was older, he went to work in the fish plant. "I was 15 years old when I started in the fish plant," he says.

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"I was short then. They had to Put me up on three boxes to get up to the cuttin' table so they could show me how to cut fish. I cried for my first job. My first pay cheque was two hundred and something dollars. I took that and bought all My supplies for school."

Dennis learned a lot about working in a fish plant. "There's a lot of stuff I can tell you like turbot sizes . . . two to four, four to eight, eight to sixteen and over. Then there's cod. There's jumbo and there's large, there's minced cod and all that stuff. Because somebody doesn't have their Grade 10 or Grade 12 doesn't mean they're stupid. You have to be smart to work in a fish plant. Not everybody can cut fish. By the time I left I was one of the top cutters there."

"I worked hard. I didn't know anything else to do. Education didn't mean anything to me at that time, but now I can see. If I knew then what I know now it would have been a priority for me to get my education. I Wouldn't have to depend on the fishery so much like I do now.,,

Dennis says, 'My goal is to get my education and do something that will Provide for my family here in Newfoundland. If the fishery ever comes back, I'd love to be involved in it again. I love cutting fish at the plant, but I don't think You'll ever see the fishery open again. I don't think I'll ever work cutting in the plant because the technology has changed.'

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Today, Dennis is married with two children. "I get a lot of support from them," he says. I don't mind staying at home and doing housework, but it's hard being out of work. My wife is smart. She finished her Grade 12. She's there and she's all the support I need."

Dennis is in an adult basic education program. "I'm excited now that I've got an opportunity to go to school and get my Grade 12. Everything I do is exciting to me. It's difficult but it's going to work out in time. I'm not losing anything by going down here," he says. "I'm only taking a bit of my time and spending it at something that will help me in the future. There's a lot of work involved in getting a credit, but you can go at your own pace."

Dennis would like to graduate. "I think about being handed that diploma," he says. "That's my goal - to see that diploma in my hand. That would be one of the greatest things I've ever accomplished in my life."

**To Answer:**

1. What reasons does Dennis give for leaving school?
2. Did you grow up in an outport community? What was it like?

## Chapter 20

# Taking responsibility



*Scott Hynes accepted responsibility at a young age.*

Scott Hynes of Woodstock had a lot of responsibility at a young age. "I was 14 years old when I found out I was going to be a father," says Scott. "I had to grow up a little bit faster than most other kids. I told my father the child was mine and I was going to take responsibility for it. A couple of years after that I married the mother. Now we've got another little boy."

"I left home when I was 15 years old," he says. "My dad was in the ministry and every three years he moved. I asked if I could stay with my girlfriend's parents to help raise my son. I lived with her parents until I got my own home."

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Scott quit school in 1985 to go fishing. "I wasn't doing anything with it. I was a hard ticket. I spent more days out of school than I did in school. I had the wrong kind of attitude."

Scott got a job in Woodstock. "I would help on the government wharf weighing and unloading fish. One day the buyer walked out and I had to run the entire operation. At first it was difficult, but the fishermen and the company really helped me. I was responsible for weighing fish and shipping it to plants in Jackson's Arm and Salvage. I was a weigh master, but I controlled everything because there were only two of us."

Scott was out of work when the fishery closed. He began receiving TAGS money but he was cut off. "I worked in Woodstock but the company's head office was in Jackson's Arm," he says. "The Jackson's Arm plant produces less than ten per cent groundfish and its employees don't qualify for TAGS. I handled mostly groundfish. My cheque was issued from Jackson's Arm and the TAGS people thought I wasn't processing enough groundfish."

"The first year that I was on TAGS I wanted to get into school."

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When I got straightened away, they shut me down," he says. "I'd lose my TAGS. I lost them twice. The first time I lost them I went in and talked to the head honchos and got it all straightened up. Like I told them, they can take my TAGS money, but don't take me out of school. I told them if I don't qualify for TAGS, keep the TAGS but put me in school. I said I haven't got a leg to stand on. Here I am, the cod moratorium is on, I couldn't work at the stage and that's all I've done."

Scott took an ABE program at the Central Newfoundland Regional College in Baie Verte. He thought he wouldn't have to complete the full ABE program. "They told me I needed 36 credits. The principal said, 'Scott, you're going to be the entire year and probably all of next year.' I said, 'All of this year and all of next year? Two years in school getting Grade 12?' I said, 'Man, don't tell me that.' It knocked the wind right clean outta my sails."

Scott was determined to finish the course by June. He received his diploma on May 25, 1995. "ABE is different from high school or other courses because you're doing one on one. You're treated as an adult," he says.

Scott started a truck-driving course in October 1995. "That's all I ever wanted to do since I was knee-high to a grasshopper. I want to try it all," he says. "if it moves I want to see if I can drive it, as long it doesn't fly off the ground."

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Scott and his family have a home in Woodstock. "I'm afraid to sell my house. I don't know what I'm going to do yet," he says. "We know we're going to have to leave. They've got the government wharf taken down in Woodstock, so the chances of me getting a job are slim. It's not the point that we mind moving, but if there's no work I don't want to be on welfare." You can bar it up and when you get settled then you can sell it. If you go and everything bottoms out, then at least you know you still got a roof over your head."

Scott would like to have a course finished before he moves. "It's no good to go without your Grade 12 or a trade in something. You need Grade 12 just to get in the woods. That's not to say I want to work in the woods," he laughs. "It's important to have an education."

"I was 14 years old when I found out I was going to be a father. I had to grow up a little bit faster than most other kids."

**-Scott Hynes**



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**To Answer:**

1. How old was Scott when he became a father?
2. Why did Scott quit school?
3. What did Scott do at work? How does this compare to your job?
4. Did you have your TAGS income cut? How was this similar to Scott's problem?
5. How many credits do you need to complete your ABE program? When would you like to graduate?
6. Scott says, "It's important to have an education." Do you agree?
7. Why do you think Scott is afraid to sell his home? Are you thinking about selling your home?
8. Will you have a job to return to when the fishery reopens. Discuss.

## Chapter 21

# Short-term gain, long term pain

"I was looking at the short-term. I wasn't even considering the long term. Now I can see the mistakes I made. I could be finished university with a degree and have a secure job."



*Mike Williams is proud of his success.*

Mike Williams is 27 years old. He lives in Triton. He quit school in 1985. Like his four brothers, he worked at the Triton fish plant where he made a good living. Mike owned a motorcycle and a car by the time he was 19 years old.

Mike says, "I got out of school that summer.

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I got to work there and I stayed there. I didn't go back to school. My parents really didn't want me to quit but at the time money wasn't plentiful anywhere. An extra bit of money coming into the house was the thing at the time. They didn't really want me to quit. I quit school because I wanted a job."

Mike was proud of his comfortable lifestyle, but he was ashamed of his education. "If anybody asked me if I finished school, I wouldn't want to talk about it at all," he says. "I was ashamed of it. I didn't feel I was as important as everybody else. I felt everybody was better than me. I'm really proud that I'm back in school."

The plant closed and Mike didn't have a job or an education. He got support from his family and friends to go back to school. "My wife started me off," he says. "The first year I wasn't really interested in returning to school because I figured the fishery was going to come back. Afterwards, I saw that nothing was going to return so I decided to go back to school."

Mike says, "We talked about if I go to school somewhere whether she'd keep the job she's got now. If I can go to school and get something then we're willing to leave. We've got no other choice. I built a house and it's kind of keeping me here. It's a lot to leave your house. I'm not sure if I would sell it. That's a big decision. I would say that selling it now will be hard."

Mike returned to school in October 1994. "The first couple of weeks I was really nervous," says Mike. "I was too nervous to operate a computer. I was frightened to death of it at first. I was frightened to touch a button, but now I'm really interested."

The fishery is a thing of the past for Mike. "As far as I'm concerned I am going to get a job somewhere else," he says. "I would like to work as a radiologist or maybe take a three-year computer course."

Mike says, "The quicker I can get this over and get off TAGS the better for me. I'm ashamed of it because everywhere you go people ask, 'What do you do?'"

Mike is sorry he didn't start ABE classes sooner. "Education is first with me," he says. "I'm here all day and I go home in the evening and study."

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**To Answer:**

1. Why did Mike leave school?
2. What does Mike say now about quitting school?
3. How did Mike feel when he went back to school?
4. How does Mike feel about receiving TAGS?
5. What are Mike's career plans?

"If anybody asked me if I finished school, I wouldn't want to talk about it at all. I was ashamed of it. I didn't feel I was as important as everybody else. I felt everybody was better than me."

**- Mike Williams**

# Glossary

<b>accomplished:</b>	Finished or completed
<b>allowance:</b>	money given at agreed periods of time
<b>apprentice:</b>	a person just starting out in a trade
<b>asset:</b>	a valuable or good thing to have
<b>atmosphere:</b>	a mood or feeling
<b>benefit:</b>	something that helps a person or thing
<b>bursary:</b>	money given to a person to attend school
<b>chute:</b>	a steep slide through which things may pass
<b>collapse:</b>	the act of falling in or breaking down
<b>determination:</b>	a definite or firm purpose
<b>discipline:</b>	to train to obey
<b>encouragement:</b>	the act of giving help or hope
<b>enroll:</b>	to become a member
<b>Florence Nightingale:</b>	English lady who cared for the sick
<b>fortunate:</b>	lucky
<b>hectic:</b>	rushed or busy
<b>isolated:</b>	set apart or alone
<b>moratorium:</b>	delay or closing of something
<b>occupy:</b>	to take up space
<b>opportunity:</b>	a good chance or time
<b>outlook:</b>	a view into the future
<b>priority:</b>	something given special attention
<b>probation:</b>	a period of time given to test a person's behaviour
<b>reluctant:</b>	unwilling to do something
<b>sacrifice:</b>	the act of giving up something for something else
<b>secure:</b>	safe from harm or loss
<b>submit:</b>	to present
<b>technology:</b>	the science that has to do with making new things
<b>tradition:</b>	custom or belief passed from old to young
<b>tragedy:</b>	a sad event